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Susan Hopkins

Purcellville, Virginia

JUL 27 2004
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July 25, 2004

Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034
Alexandria, VA 22302

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has come to my attention that the USDA is considering a revision of the existing food guide pyramid. I would like to make it known that I strongly support the Atkins low-carbohydrate model.

There is absolutely no doubt that sugar and non-nutritive junk food is killing our country. We see the results of this trend in the current obesity crisis, the dramatic increase in diabetes in both adults and children, and rampant heart disease. The human body was not designed to thrive on Tostitos, Little Debbie cream pies, and Coca Cola.

There is also no doubt that the manufacturers of these foods are making money hand over fist and will continue to try to convince us that a baked chip is a "healthy" alternative to a fried one, or that a sugar-laden treat is healthful because it is "low fat." That is a complete pile of marketing garbage designed to remove money from our pockets. Junk food should literally require labeling as a threat to health.

Thirteen months ago, I decided to put my all into a low-carbohydrate diet and an aerobic-weight-training exercise program. To date, I have lost 40 pounds. I feel fabulous. I have loads of lean muscle tissue and energy to burn. I intend to eat and exercise this way for the rest of my life. It is easy to stick to such a diet; I am rarely hungry and never feel deprived as I did during a lifetime of failed attempts to lose weight on low-fat, high-carbohydrate diets.

And may I note that I said nothing about controlling fat. I count calories (calories always count) but not fat grams; nor do I consider whether it is saturated or unsaturated. Yet, after over a year on such a diet and exercise program, my LDL remained at its previous (acceptable) level, my HDL increased dramatically, and my LDL/HDL ratio is now in the live-forever range. My triglycerides have gone from elevated to practically non-existent. Eating fat has NOT made me fat. Eating cholesterol has NOT given me high cholesterol.

My mother is 69 and has always believed what the government told her concerning how to eat. Four months ago, she was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. I coached her on how to convert to a

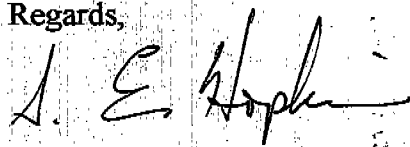
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low-carb diet without missing a thing, and not only is her blood sugar completely under control, but she has lost 25 pounds.

Admit you made a mistake and get with the program, guys. Sugar and junk food are just not where it's at if we want to resolve this country's health problems. Give the folks who believe what you tell them a hand and guide them away from these non-nutritive, calorie-dense disasters.

And while you're at it, get margarine off the shelves and tell people to eat butter. Subsidize producers of organic meat and poultry, which is much too difficult to find or afford. Support the consumer rather than the stock market and give us some decent food to eat!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'S. E. Hopkins'.

Susan Hopkins

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10-1 Bhaskar

Food Guide Reassessment Team
USDA Center for Nutrition
Policy and Promotion
3101 Park Center Drive
Room 1034
Alexandria, VA 22302

Dear USDA Food Guide Reassessment Team,

The food guide pyramid is a symbol of healthy eating habits, and needs to be updated to reflect our building nutritional knowledge.

I strongly recommend that the "Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts" group be changed. With the name and graphic of this food group, the serving suggestion makes it sound as if it is recommended to eat 2-3 servings of meat, when actually this means it is recommended to eat 2-3 servings of protein providing food. Meat and poultry are neither necessary for nor advantageous to a healthy diet. The meat consumption in this country is ridiculously unsustainable and inefficient, and the food guide has the possibility of slowing this dangerous trend.

I recommend changing the name of this group to "Protein Group" and better emphasizing the non-meat options for this food group, including nuts, lentils, beans and soy products. These options should be much better represented in the graphic of the group, the explanation, the "Lean choices" section, and in general the entire food guide. Currently, this food group is almost solely about meat.

In addition, the new food guide pyramid should be clearer about number of servings for different people by making a color-coded key. I recommend a tri-color classification of people according to their activity level, age, and size. Then, the number of servings can be written in the three different colors for easy use.

Thank you for your time,
Sincerely,

Aditi Bhaskar

North Potomac, MD

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Keiser

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To Whom It May Concern:
RE: Food Pyramid Replacement Submission

While I was eating a box of Wheat Thins, the food pyramid on the box was staring at me. So I for some unknown reason figured I would look on the Internet to see if there was a similar pyramid for salts and spices (relating to heart health). When doing that I came across a few articles about the USDA thinking of giving the current triangle an overhaul.

As I was reading an image drew in my head, then I spent an hour or so in mspaint drawing the attached image. It is a bit crude but I think it will get my point across. The articles I was reading stated some things about possibly extending the vegetable group, and adding Exercise to the graphic while trying to figure out a better place for sweets other than at the top, due it being misleading to the general public.

What I see when I look at the un-named (hourglass) is a not too hard to understand representation of a not too complicated shape that people can relate to (who has never played a board game with an hourglass). Other than just food groups it can suggest eating healthy may provide a uniform body shape, while putting the 2 most important (and largest) groups on the outer edges. As well as the hourglass represents time (which could be suggested as daily servings). If you think about it this thing is riddled with healthy subliminal messages. Might I suggest, try coloring the words. For example, if I was to look at the food pyramid now, and the serving sizes were red (or another bright color) instead of just bold, they would stand out better.

I am going to leave it up to your team(s) to figure out how to color it, and a better placement for the words so the pictures can be fit back in (The way the coloring and pictures are in the current pyramid appeals to me, with the pictures in the pyramid and word references around the image with information about the group, giving room for the description).

I understand I loose rights to the thought by submitting this, so I figured that instead of it haunting me in my head, the thought would do better in your organization.

Out of curiosity, why doesn't your office accept submissions for things like this via email? It just seems silly not to.

If I can be of any assistance or need to explain farther, I have included a way to contact me below.

Thank You
Chris Keiser

Email: (_____)
Phone: (_____)

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